

Message Text

SECRET

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y ((PARA 5 LINE 10))

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS PFOR MU US UK
SUBJECT: MASIRAH ISLAND; FOREIGN MINISTER ZAWAWI'S VISIT TO U.S.

REF: (A) LONDON 10969; (B) MUSCAT 0865; (C) STATE 183422;
(D) LONDON 14722; (E) MUSCAT 1023 (F) MUSCAT 0914 (G) MUSCAT 1124
(H) STATE 185056

1. MINSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS QAIS ZAWAWI, WHO LEAVES MUSCAT
SEPT 27 FOR TWO-DAY PRIVATE VISIT TO SEOUL, BRIEF ATTENDANCE AT
IMF/IBRD MEETINGS IN MANILA, AND STAY IN NEW YORK FROM OCTOBER
6-15, TOLD ME AGAIN SEPT 22 HE WISHES TO MEET WITH YOU. SAID
HE HOPES TO HEAR FROM YOU AT THAT TIME SOMETHING OF DEGREE OF
USG INTEREST IN CONTINUING THIS WINTER AND FOR PERIOD AFTER RAF
DEPARTURE FROM MASIRAH NEXT MARCH OUR P-3 AND RELATED "VISITS."
HE ASKED IF I WOULD ASCERTAIN YOUR SCHEDULE AND WHETHER YOU
COULD POSSIBLY SEE HIM EITHER IN NEW YORK OR WASHINGTON ON
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, WITH MONDAY, OCTOBER 18 AS ALTERNATE DATE.

2. ZAWAWI'S NEW YORK SCHEDULE INCLUDES ARRIVAL (REGENCY HOTEL)
OCT 6, PREPARATIONS FROM THEN UNTIL OCT 11 FOR HIS OCT 12
UNGA ADDRESS, MEETINGS OCT 13 WITH VARIOUS ARAB MINISTERS

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BEFORE THEY DEPART, AND LUNCHEON OCT 14 OFFERED HIM BY NEW

YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST. ON OCT 16-17 WEEKEND HE PLANS BE IN INDIANAPOLIS VISITING SISTER BEFORE FLYING TO LONDON OCT 18-19. HE HAS NO REASON VISIT WASHINGTON OTHER THAN DESIRE TALK WITH YOU.

3. ON MASIRAH, AS I HOPE OUR TELEGRAMS HAVE MADE CLEAR, THE OMANIS NOW ARE SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN PRESSING US TO INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WITH THEM ABOUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEXT SPRING AND BEYOND. ZAWAWI SAID TODAY THAT IN ORDER TO ASSURE SMOOTH TURNOVER FROM RAF AND TO KNOW JUST WHERE IT IS HEADING IN ITS NEW ARRANGEMENTS, OMANGOV HOPES WE ARE READY NOW TO COMMENT ON SOME OF HIS REMARKS MADE IN LONDON IN JULY (REF A) REGARDING USE AND MAINTENANCE OF MASIRAH AIRFIELD, POSSIBLE COLLECTIVE SECURITY ACTIVITIES PERHAPS INVOLVING THE U.S., IRAN AND EVEN SAUDI ARABIA, SHARING OF THE RESULTS OF INTELLIGENCE, AND THE LIKE. HE PUT FORWARD TODAY ONE CONCRETE NEW SUGGESTION: THAT U.S. AND OMANI TEAMS, MOSTLY TECHNICAL AND WITH MILITARY PARTICIPATION, GET TOGETHER THIS FALL TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON INTERESTS, ARRANGEMENTS AND MUTUAL BENEFITS THAT MIGHT BE WORTH PURSUING AT MASIRAH. HE THOUGHT THE VENUE COULD BE OMAN. LONDON OR ELSEWHERE BUT WAS INCLINED TO FAVOR OMAN AS THE PLACE AND EARLY DECEMBER AS THE TIME. (COMMENT: PERHAPS HE WISHES AVOID SUPB A GATHERING UNTIL AFTER NOV 25 GULF FOREIGN MINISTERS GATHERING IN MUSCAT.) ZAWAWI WAS AS COY AS EVER ABOUT WHAT OMAN REALLY WANTS OUT OF ALL THIS.

4. COMMENT: I SENSE THE OMANIS LOOK AT THE MATTER AS FOLLOWS. THE AMERICANS ARE THREE MONTHS INTO THEIR SERIES OF OCCASIONAL P-3 GLIGHTS. THEY SHOULD KNOW BY NOW FROM ACTUAL EXPERIENCE JUST WHAT BENEFITS THE USE OF MASIRAH CAN GIVE THEM, JUST WHAT THEY NEED LOGISTICALLY TO OPERATE IN AND OUT OF THE ISLAND, AND HOW IT FITS INTO THEIR INDIAN OCEAN STRATEGY. NOW WITH ONLY SIX MONTHS TO GO BEFORE WE OMANIS TAKE OVER FROM THE BRITISH ON MASIRAH, WE MUST GO AHEAD RAPIDLY WITH OUR PLANS TO REPLACE RAF PERSONNEL, TAKE OVER THEIR FACILITIES, AND PROCEED WITHOUT TOO MANY HITCHES. IT WOULD BE A BIG HELP TO US IF THE USG WOULD HELP IN CASH OR EQUIPMENT SO WE CAN GET EVERYTHING READY. SURELY IF MASIRAH IS WORTH SOMETHING TO THE AMERICANS, NOW IS WHEN THEY SHOULD BEGIN TO TELL US WHAT THEY REALLY WANT THERE AND WHAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO OFFER FOR IT. (INCI-
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DENTALLY, I KNOW OF NO RECENT DISCUSSIONS ABOUT MASIRAH BETWEEN THE IRANIANS OR SAUDIS AND THE OMANIS.)

5. I CERTAINLY REALIZE THERE MAY BE SEVERAL VALID REASONS FROM THE USG POINT OF VIEW FOR WANTING TO COAST ALONG AS WE ARE JUST NOW, USING MASIRAH FOR SAY ANOTHER QUARTER OR SO AT MINIMAL IF ANY COST. AND I DO NOT THINK THAT ZAWAWI EXPECTS HE CAN GET ANY FINAL ANSWERS OR FULLY DEFINITIVE POSITIONS

FROM YOU IN MID-OCTOBER. BUT HE CERTAINLY EXPECTS THAT WE
WILL BEGIN TO TALK OF THE FUTURE VERY SHORTLY NOW, AND HE
WILL BE MOST UNCOMFORTABLE IF ON RETURNING HERE IN LATE OCTOBER
HE HAS TO REPORT COMPLETE LACK OF MOVEMENT ON OUR PART TOWARD
NEGOTIATING WITH OMAN ABOUT 1977 AND BEYOND. I THEREFORE VERY
MUCH HOPE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DISCUSS VARIOUS RAMIFICATIONS OF
THE MATTER WITH ZAWAWI, GIVE HIM SOME IDEA OF THE TECHNICAL
INPUTS OR OTHER SWEETENERS THE USG MIGHT CONSIDER MAKING SO
AS TO ENCOURAGE THE OMANGOV TO MAINTAIN A PROPER AIRFIELD
COMPLEX BEYOND MARCH, AND INDICATE HOW, WHEN AND WHERE WE
WOULD PROPOSE NEGOTIATING THE DETAILS. ZAWAWI ALSO WILL WANT
A REACTION TO HIS NEW SUGGESTION IN PARA 3.

6. SUGGEST NEA REPEAT JIDDA, LONDON AND TEHRAN AS DESIRED.
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